

# *AJISS-Commentary*

**The Association of Japanese Institutes of Strategic Studies**

**NPI**

Nakasone Yasuhiro  
Peace Institute

**JIIA**

The Japan Institute of  
International Affairs  
(Secretariat)

**RIPS**

Research Institute for  
Peace and Security

No. 304

4 August 2023

## **JAPAN'S POLICY TOWARD MATERIALIZING COOPERATION WITH THE GLOBAL SOUTH ~REALIZING THE RULE OF LAW, RESOLVING GLOBAL ISSUES AND STRENGTHENING CONNECTIVITY~**

***Kunihiko Shinoda***

- In collaborating with emerging and developing countries in the Global South, we should respect the principle of the rule of law and promote dialogue and cooperation under the concept of the Free and Open Indo-Pacific Partnership (FOIP), which in part represents Japan's commitment to the Global South, with a focus on the Indo-Pacific.
- As areas of cooperation with the Global South, emphasis should be placed on: i) establishing principles for peace and rules for prosperity; ii) addressing global issues such as the environment, energy, food security, and international health; and iii) strengthening multilayered connectivity, including infrastructure, institutions, human exchange, and digital technologies.
- Building on the cooperation with the Global South discussed at the G7 Hiroshima Summit in May 2023, further cooperation should be materialized at the East Asia Summit, the G20 Summit, and the APEC Summit that will be hosted by major FOIP partner countries this year.

*The views expressed in this piece are the author's own and should not be attributed to The Association of Japanese Institutes of Strategic Studies.*

**Importance of the Global South**

The Global South is coming into the limelight. In January 2023, India as a leader among emerging economies hosted the “Voice of the Global South Summit” attended by representatives from more than 120 countries, and strengthening engagement with partners such as the Global South and the G20 was discussed as one of the main topics at the G7 Hiroshima Summit in May 2023. The Global South is often used as a generic term for non-aligned/neutral emerging and developing countries located in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East that are not classified as either advanced democratic countries centered around the G7, or authoritarian countries such as China and Russia. In terms of GDP, these countries accounted for about 5% of the world economy in 2000, but their share increased to about 20% in 2020. They are also similar in their pursuit of good diplomatic relations with both Western countries and China/Russia, and in their efforts to secure their own interests on a case-by-case basis.

Why are Japan and the developed Western countries seeking to strengthen their ties with the Global South? First, on the political and security front, there is a need to work with more partners in the international community to build a free and open international order based on the rule of law in order to respond to Russia's invasion of Ukraine that began in 2022. Second, countries in the Global South are vulnerable with regard to issues such as climate change, energy security, food security, and international health, and solving these global issues through co-creation with the Global South will lead to greater stability in the international order. Third, in terms of economics, the countries of the Global South will develop into global production centers and consumer markets in the future due to population growth and the emergence of a middle class, and there is much room for economic growth together as developed countries.

**Direction of Cooperation with the Global South**

What direction should we take in promoting cooperation with the Global South? Japan and Western countries should encourage partner countries to become prosperous and secure, so that freedom and democracy can take root as a result. On the other hand, the countries of the Global South have diverse values and historical and cultural backgrounds that sometimes lead to acceptance of authoritarian state ideas. Rather than unilaterally imposing the values of developed countries, it is necessary to present a way of thinking about the international order that is acceptable to all.

In March 2023, Japan launched a new plan for a “Free and Open Indo-Pacific Partnership (FOIP)” in which it aims to lead the international community toward cooperation rather than division and confrontation. The FOIP in part represents Japan's commitment to the Global South, with a focus on the Indo-Pacific. It defends freedom and the rule of law, stating that law is necessary for vulnerable countries and that the principles of the UN Charter should be upheld. It also states that it respects diversity, inclusiveness, and openness, does not exclude specific countries, does not create camps, and does not impose its values on others. Based on these principles, the approach to be taken in the future is to promote rule-making through dialogue, equal partnerships among nations, and efforts focusing on people.

### **Japan's Strengths and Weaknesses**

Japan's strengths in promoting dialogue and cooperation are that it has participated in various forums in the international community, including the G7, the G20, APEC, the East Asia Summit, TICAD (Tokyo International Conference on African Development), and PALM (Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting), and that it has built trust not only with developed countries but also with countries in the Global South. Japan has continued to provide detailed support for infrastructure development, human resource development, and institution building based on local needs from a standpoint of equality with partner countries. In addition to government initiatives, Japanese industry has formed broad supply chains, mainly in Western countries and Asia, and has been working to promote industry, develop human resources, and resolve social issues in other countries.

On the other hand, Japan's ODA budget for FY2023 is about half of its peak FY1997 level, and its ODA in 2022 remained the world's third-largest after the US's and Germany's. Japan has high levels of government and industry involvement in the Global South in regions such as Southeast Asia and South Asia, but relatively low levels in regions such as Africa, Central Asia, and South America. In addition, there is room for improvement in the infrastructure, products, and services provided by Japanese industries and companies in terms of cost competitiveness and speed of implementation. To address these issues, Japan should also strengthen its engagement with countries in the Global South outside of Asia through top-level diplomacy at the summit and ministerial levels. In addition, it should introduce offer-type ODA and mobilize private-sector funds through revision of the Japan's Development Cooperation Charter

and other measures, and promote cooperation between Japanese companies and partner companies in the Global South.

### **Specific Cooperation with the Global South**

What specific cooperation with the Global South should be promoted? The New Plan for a Free and Open Indo-Pacific Partnership (FOIP) outlines a number of specific cooperation initiatives. This section will focus on the development of guidelines for the rule of law and specific cooperation in the economic field.

The first is implementing the principles for peace and the rules for prosperity. In order to realize peace in the international community, the principles stipulated in the UN Charter, such as respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity and opposition to unilateral changes to the status quo by force, should be upheld. For example, the G7 and ASEAN are engaged in dialogue to strengthen order through the rule of law, and efforts are being made to support human resource development and the establishment of legal systems in developing countries. In addition, the developed countries aim to formulate high-standard rules through the CPTPP, IPEF, etc., while maintaining the WTO rules as a foundation in order to build a free, fair, and just economic order. To involve the Global South in rule-making, it is necessary at the same time to improve market access through trade liberalization and promote economic and technical cooperation as in the CPTPP and RCEP. It is also vital to create rules that prevent opaque and unfair practices, and Japan is advocating the implementation of the G20 Principles for Quality Infrastructure Investment in the field of development finance. Furthermore, Japan is trying to strengthen cooperation among like-minded countries against economic coercion by some authoritarian states to mitigate the damage and to counter and deter such economic coercion.

The second is addressing the global issues that the Global South also faces. With regard to climate, the environment, and energy security, countries in the Global South are seeking to achieve both decarbonization and economic growth, and Japan is supporting realistic energy transitions in Asia under the “Asia Zero Emission Community” concept. In addition, Japan is providing assistance to cover losses and damage to countries in the Indo-Pacific that are vulnerable to natural disasters caused by climate change. Food security is an important theme, as Russia's invasion of Ukraine has caused food shortages and price hikes in developing countries. The Hiroshima Action Statement for Resilient Global Food Security was launched at the G7 Hiroshima Summit. In the area of global health, it is also important to pursue cooperation to


achieve universal health coverage and, in particular, Japan is trying to contribute to equitable access to medical countermeasures (MCM). Furthermore, to enhance the economic resilience of the region, efforts should be made to strengthen and diversify the supply chains of critical goods and to ensure the safety of critical infrastructure.

The third is strengthening multi-layered connectivity. Connecting countries in the Indo-Pacific region in a variety of areas, including physical and institutional infrastructure, human exchange and digital technology, will lead to dynamic growth for the entire region. Japan is supporting the enhancement of ASEAN connectivity centering on land, sea, and air corridor connectivity projects, and encouraging human resource development that will contribute to enhanced connectivity. It is also necessary to promote the establishment of industrial value chains in the Bay of Bengal/Northeast India in order to strengthen connectivity between Southeast Asia and South Asia. Making integrated improvements to airports, ports, and communication infrastructure in Pacific island countries will also be required. With regard to human exchange, Japan should strive to upgrade “knowledge” connectivity, focusing on younger generations, universities and research institutes, and start-ups. For greater digital connectivity, open RAN (Radio Access Network), submarine cable installation/maintenance, Data Free Flow with Trust (DFFT), and digital transformation (DX) in Asia should be fostered.

### **Diplomatic Development of Cooperation with the Global South**

Japan launched its New Plan for a “Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)” in March 2023, and held the G7 Hiroshima Summit in May 2023 to promote dialogue and cooperation not only with G7 members but also with other invited countries and international organizations, especially those from the Global South. Looking at this year's diplomatic schedule, the East Asia Summit (chaired by Indonesia) will be held in September, the G20 New Delhi Summit (chaired by India) and the APEC Summit (chaired by the US) in November, and the ASEAN-Japan Commemorative Summit in December. Indonesia is a proponent of the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP) and India and the US are Quad partners. This is an opportune time to develop cooperation for the Global South based on a “Free and Open Indo-Pacific”.

While spreading the idea of upholding a free and open international order based on the rule of law agreed to at the G7 Hiroshima Summit as a common thread, cooperation in solving specific global issues and strengthening multilayered connectivity should be materialized. In particular, the G20 Summit in September that will feature the participation of major emerging and developing countries is expected to call for concrete

cooperation in areas such as development finance, SDGs, health, climate change, energy and food, while successfully coordinating the wording of the Leaders' Declaration on Russia's invasion of Ukraine. It is also hoped that the East Asia Summit and the ASEAN-Japan Commemorative Summit will bring about AOIP cooperation, reinforce ties between ASEAN and the Quad, and come up with a new vision for cooperation and broad concrete measures on the 50th anniversary of ASEAN-Japan friendship and cooperation. The APEC Leaders' Meeting is also expected to make progress on cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region in line with the priorities of being interconnected, innovative, and inclusive. In addition, closer dialogue and cooperation should be pursued in future under summit-level forums such as TICAD and PALM to concretize cooperation with African and Pacific Island countries and countries elsewhere in the broader Global South. 

*Kunihiko Shinoda is Professor at the National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies.*